hon. Member wrote to the Department about opening of five post offices at Dehri, Mahram, Tentalibari, Tarasahi and Azamgarh. We have examined these proposals and have found that the proposal number 3 at Tentalibari fulfils the prescribed norms.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: There is a ban on the recruitment of postal staff since 1984. There is a shortage of operating staff like the Postal Assistants, Postmen etc. resulting in more workload and decrease in efficiency. For example, in my own town there was one Postman when its population was 5,000; but now when the population is 30,000, still there is one Postman. I represented the matter several times. Even the Postmaster General, Andhra Pradesh, said that my request was justified and that he sent the proposals to the Director-General New Delhi, on 27th April, 1989, but no action has been taken so far. I would, therefore, like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is going to lift the ban on the recruitment of postal staff.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : It is true that there was a total ban on recruitment in 1985-86 and in 1986-87 resulting in the fact that we could not open any new post office. But this ban was relaxed to a certain extent. Now we are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand there is demand to open up more post offices, on the other there is also a demand to equip the existing post offices with more number of personnel while the resource available is limited. Therefore, we have to make choices. That is why the number with which we want to man some post offices is less even though we desire to have more staff. But the problem remains that we are to make choice for going in for new post offices or . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is very simple. He wants to know if you are going to remove the ban on new recruitment. That is all.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : I submit that there has been some relaxation on the ban....*(Interruptions)*. We have now brought this before the Cabinet for approval of 2,800 persons for these post offices. We are awaiting the approval.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : Though the question pertains to Orissa, there is a demand all over the country including Tamil Nadu to have more post offices in rural areas. In the answer to the question it is stated :

> "81 proposals for opening of new post offices in rural areas have been formulated. In view of the continuing ban on creation of posts these proposals require the concurrence of the Ministry of Finance."

I would like to know from the hon. Minister in which year the ban was imposed and whether there is any proposal to remove this ban so that the rural population can have the post offices and the infrastructure can be created in this country.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : I have already replied to this point. I have also replied that we are now interacting with the Finance Ministry regarding review of the norms. Once the norms are reviewed in the light of the observations, we will come to some decisions.

कुछ चुने हुए राजमार्गों का एक्सप्रेस राजमार्गों के रूप में परिवर्तित किया जाना

*124. श्री अजीत जोगी : क्या जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री 3 मई, 1989 को राज्य सभा में अतारांकित प्रश्न 884 के दिए गए उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि

(क) क्या सरकार देश में भूतल परिवहन के क्षेत्र में सुधार लाने की दृष्टि

में कुछ चुने हुए राजमार्गों को (जिनमें भोपाल से इन्दौर तक का राजमार्ग भी शामिल है) एक्सप्रेस राजमार्गों के रूप में परिवर्तित करने पर विचार कर रही है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो यह योजना कब तक लागू हो जाएगी ;

(ग) क्या इस योजना के कार्यान्वयन के लिए निजी क्षेत्र को भी संलग्न किए जाने का प्रस्ताव है; और

(घ) प्रस्तावित भोपाल-इन्दौर एक्सप्रेस राजमार्ग किस स्तर पर लम्बित है और इसके कब तक तैयार हो जाने की संभावना है?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI) : (a) and (b) A beginning has been made by taking up the construction of Ahmedabad-Vadodara Expressway and a Study has been commissioned with a view to formulate a comprehensive plan for the Expressway network in the country.

(c) There is no specific proposal pending with the Government in this regard.

(d) No proposal for Bhopal-Indore-Expressway is under consideration.

श्री अजीत जोगी : सभापति महोदय, चूंकि एक्सप्रेस हाइवे का जो कंसेप्ट है वह नया है और इसलिए आपने अपने उत्तर में बताया है कि यह पहली बार प्रारंभ किया जाने वाला है। इसलिए मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि जो नेशनल हाईवे बनने वाले हैं, जो एक्सप्रेस हाइवे बनने वाले हैं वह नेशनल हाइवे से किस तरह गुणात्मक रूप से भिन्न होंगे ? उनमें क्या अतिरिक्त सुविधायें होंगी और समय की क्या बचत होगी ? इसके साथ ही मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूं कि विशेषकर जो अहमदाबाद-बड़ौदा एक्सप्रेस हाइवे अभी जो आप बना रहे हैं उसमें कितना औसतन समय लगता है। अहमदाबाद से बड़ौदा जाने में और एक्सप्रेस हाइवे बनने के बाद कितना समय लगेगा, इस पर भी प्रकाश डालें।

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Sir, the very idea of the Express Highway is that there will be no barrier in the Highway like railway crossing or road intersecting. The Highways have completely full smooth traffic. There will be no obstruction to the Highway at any point and that is the concept. Of course, added to it is the concept that there will be more lanes. We are contemplating of a four-lane divided Highways with six-lane structures. Now, how much time we will take to cover a particular distance depends on the type of vehicle and also the number of vehicles running on the road. Therefore, no precise figures can be given at the present moment.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI : In the project itself you must have calculated this. What would be the time saved between Ahmedabad and Vadodara?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Well, I am not in a position to give the figures now because I said that it all depends after all on what will be the traffic on that road and the traffic also varies from time to time, more traffic probably at a particular point of time, lesser traffic at a particular point of time. You have lesser traffic at night. So precise figure is not possible.

श्री अजीत जोगी : श्रीमन्, ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि शासन को भी स्थिति स्पष्ट नहीं है। मैं दूसरे पूरक प्रश्न के रूप में यह जानना चाहूंगा कि उत्तर में आपने यह उल्लेख किया है कि भोपाल इंदौर के बीच कोई एक्सप्रेस हाइवे बनाने का प्रस्ताव विचाराधीन नहीं है। मैं स्वयं संसद् सदस्य के रूप में इस संबंध में पत्राचार कर चुका हूं और मेरे पास आपके जवाब उपलब्ध हैं। सन 1987 और 1988 के जब इस विषय पर राज्य सरकार की

और से प्रस्ताव आया था और यहां तक कि इंदौर और भोपाल के बीच में जहां से एक्सप्रेस हाइवे बनेगी उसके लिए भूमि अर्जन का विज्ञापन हुआ, भूमि अर्जन की कार्यवाही भी की गई थी । इसलिए यह कहना कि ऐसा प्रस्ताव विचाराधीन नहीं है, यह गलत उत्तर दिया है ।

इसके साथ ही आपने अपने जवाब में यह कहा है कि निजी क्षेत्र को, प्राइवेट सेक्टर को एक्सप्रेस हाइवे बनाने में लगाने के लिए हमारे पास कोई विचार नहीं है क्योंकि ऐसा कोई प्रस्ताव हमारे सामने नहीं आया । मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि एक्सप्रेस हाइवे का जो कांसेप्ट है उसमें अगर हम केवल पब्लिक सैक्टर तक कंफाइन करें और निजी क्षेत्र को इसमें इन्वाल्व न करें तो इसमें जो लाभ होना चाहिए वह नहीं हो पाएगा, आपके पास रिसोर्स कांस्ट्रेंट होंगे और जो सरकारी काम करने में इनेफिशेंसी आती हैं वह अड़चनें होंगी । इसलिए क्या शासन निजी क्षेत्र का सहयोग लेकर उनको विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में एक्सप्रेस हाइवे बनाने के लिए अपनी तरफ से आमंत्रित करेगा । आप उनको आमंत्रित करें और इसमें इन्वाल्व होकर आपको सहयोग दें, क्या ऐसी कार्यवाही आप करेंगे? इन दोनों प्रश्नों के उत्तर में चाहता हूं—एक तो भोपाल इंदौर के बारे में और दूसरे निजी क्षेत्र को इन्वाल्व करने के बारे में ।

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Before I respond to the two parts of the question, I would like to inform the hon. Member that according to us the Expressway vehicles will be able to move at a speed of 120 KM. Normally the maximum speed that is allowed in the National Highways is 80 KM. Therefore, some calculation can be made as to what time will be taken.

Now, he has asked me a question regarding Bhopal-Indore Expressway. I may point out to him that Bhopal-Indore is not even a National Highway at the present moment. It is not a National Highway. Well, to make it an Expressway is still farther way.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI : Road should be a National Highway?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : He has also asked me about steps for encouraging private investment. Sir, it is a fact that in January, 1988 we explore the prospects of participation of private firms or private sector in funding and operating of Highways. In fact, we asked for offers and some offers came. But while giving these offers, the private sector had laid down a number of conditions, the condition that the Government should advance an interest free loan up to 20-30 per cent..... the condition that the Government should give tax holidays and we find that the conditions are such that the private sector was not really willing to come unless very substantial concessions are given to them. But the matter is still under examination.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there are any proposals from the State Government of Maharashtra to convert some of the National Highways into the Express Highways? I have heard a few days back that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra has stated that a Poona-Bombay National Highway is to be converted into the Express Highway and the work is to be given to the private agencies. The hon. Minister has stated just now that it is under examination, but whenever we ask about the conversion of State Highways into National Highways or other developmental programmes, the stereotyped answer comes that due to the constraint of resources, it cannot be done.

Secondly, considering the underdeveloped regions of the different parts of the country, for example, Marathwada in Maharashtra,

where only 50 kms National Highway is there the state Government of Maharashtra when hon. Shri S.B. Chavan, was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, had sent some four or five proposals from Marathwada region to covert the State Highways into National Highways but the answer has come long back that it is under consideration. I would like to know how far this consideration will go on. Is there any time-limit for this consideration? As far as the development of the region is concerned? the people are very much eager to know what is being done in their region. I would like to ask the hon. Minister is there any proposal, is there any concrete consideration to convert the State Highways into National Highways and what are the proposals from the State Government of Maharashtra to convert the National Highways into Express Highways?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Sir, my hon. friend has referred to a distinguished Member, Mr. S.B. Chavan's request as a Chief Minister. If such a distinguished Member, being a Minister of the Union Cabinet could not convert his own request as a Chief Minister, well, he must give me some time to consider this proposal. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Sir, he is shifting the responsibility.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : I am not shifting the responsibility. I am only pointing out a fact. To the satisfaction of the hon. Member, I can point out that we have two roads in Maharashtra under consideration for Express Highways—one is Bombay—Pune-145 kms. and the Vadodara-Bombay, that is 423 kms. We have made some studies. Now obviously it will depend on the States and the financial allocations. Unfortunately, the financial allocation for the road sector has been very low and has been broughnt down during every Plan period. I can give the figures. Whereas in the First Plan, it was 1.4, in the 7th Plan, it was 0.50 and therefore the constraint of resources is there and and so long as that constraint is there, my constraint to satisfy the Member is also there. I cannot help it.

कुमारी सईदा खातुन : मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि एक्सप्रेस हाइवे में अगर भोपाल-इन्दौर राजमार्ग को नहीं लिया गया है तो मध्य प्रदेश में कौन से ऐसे राजमार्ग हैं जो इस एक्सप्रेस हाइवे में लिए जा रहे हैं ? दूसरा प्रश्न यह है कि पूरे भारतवर्ष में ऐसे कितने एक्सप्रेस हाइवे बनाने का प्रावधान है जिसमें ऐसे ब्रिजेज या पुलिया आ रही हैं जिनकी आयु सीमा समाप्त होने जा रही है ? क्या इन पुलिया को नये सिरे से बनाने का प्रावधान रखा गया है ?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Sir, as I said, this is a very new concept and it will take time. It is an experimenting stage. Now apart from the roads that I mentioned, there are three roads under consideration—Bombay-Pune, Vadodara-Bombay and Madras-Bangalore and once these results have to come. The very idea of associating the private parties is there; therefore, it will take some time to consider it.

SHRI T. R. BALU : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister : is there any proposal under consideration to convert the National Highway No. 47 and National Highway No. 45 which are located in Tamil Nadu into Express Highways?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have mentioned the three roads. Apart from them, there is no other road.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister was pleased to state something about me when I had written to the Government of India in the capacity of Chief Minister of Maharashtra . . . . . and

in a very lighter vein, I believe, the hon. Minister was pleased to state "Being the Finance Minister himself, he could not do it. How can we possibly now? It will take some time." May I make the record straight by saying that in the Finance Ministry, now, proposals are being initiated by the Finance Ministry. Is it the contention of the hon. Minister that a proposal was made by the administrative Ministry concerned to the Finance Ministry and it was turned down by me as the Finance Minister, Sir?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : I am not saying that. What I am saying firstly, is that after all, my constraint, as it stands today, has been finance. If he, at that time, did not allocate sufficient funds as the Finance Minister, for construction of roads, then he must have some of the blame. (*Interruptions*). Please take the reply in the spirit in which I have made it.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 125.

Setting up a Doordarshan studio at Varanasi

*125. SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA JAYAWANTRAO PATIL:

SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a Doordarshan studio at Varanasi; if so, by when it is likely to be set up and the cost involved therein; and

(b) the details of work to be done there?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Suryakanta Jayawantrao Patil.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no approved scheme at present to set up a TV studio centre at Varanasi..

श्रीमती सूर्यकांता जयवंतराव पाटील : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्री से पूछना चाहती हूं कि सरकार का यह उत्तर पढ़ने के बाद मुझे खेद भी हुआ और आश्चर्य भी हुआ। वाराणसी हमारे देश के महत्वपूर्ण शहरों में से एक है जो सांस्कृतिक दृष्टि से, धार्मिक दृष्टि से तथा राजनैतिक दृष्टि से यानी सभी दृष्टियों से महत्वपूर्ण शहर है। आपने कहा है कि कोई स्कीम अनुमोदित नहीं है। मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से पूछना चाहती हूं कि क्या वहां कोई योजना विचाराधीन है जिस पर आप भविष्य में विचार करेंगे और यदि हां, तो उस पर शासन कब तक निर्णय करेगा ?

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Sir, in the Seventh Plan, a programme production centre has been planned at Allahabad. But since 1986, the State Government could not make the land available for the purpose and whatever land was selected, ultimately some difficulty was there. So for that work could not be started. Now that was planned as apart of the Doordarshan's programme to create studio facilities at cultural centres. Out of six cultural centres selected, Allahabad was one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: She wants to know about Varanasi, Kasi.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Now, if the State Government continues to face difficulty in giving land at Allahabad, we are prepared to shift this project to Varanasi.

श्रीमती सूर्यकान्ता पाटील : यह जो जमीन का मामला है, क्या सरकार इस जमीन को जल्दी से जल्दी लेने की कोशिश कर रही है या करेगी ? अगर आप जल्दी से जल्दी जमीन ले लें क्योंकि अब